

III. Endangered Lines



Rural Hall on YVRR.

Of the six lines in the Triad area that have been identified as having potential for commuter rail service in the foreseeable future, as well the three line segments that have been designated as SEHSR routings, only two lines can be considered endangered rail segments. The Yadkin Valley Railroad line from

Rural Hall to Mt. Airy carries 524 carloads a year using one freight train a week. Should NC Foam Inc. in Mt. Airy close its facility or stop using rail to transport its chemicals, this YVRR line would face an uncertain future. The NS “L Line” from Winston-Salem to Mocksville, a vital link in the proposed Burlington to Clemmons PART commuter corridor, sits idle and unused. While Norfolk Southern states it has no intention to file for abandonment of the line given its potential value as an all-NS routing between Greensboro and Charlotte, this line must nonetheless be considered endangered.

Both the Rural Hall to Mt. Airy branch and the Winston-Salem to Mocksville line, as discussed earlier, were designated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation in 1990 as strategic rail corridors. Given this designation, should these lines be put up for sale or abandonment, it is highly likely the state would make every effort to secure the necessary funding to preserve the lines for future transportation purposes.

The Rail Corridor Preservation Act, passed by the General Assembly in 1988, gives the Department of Transportation the authority to become directly involved in preserving inactive railroads “for future rail use and interim compatible uses.” Amendments to the Act in 1989 also declared it a public purpose for NCDOT to reassemble critically important lost portions of rail corridors by condemnation. Funding for rail acquisition and preservation is authorized by the Highway Trust Fund.